

DATE: March 14, 2003

TO: Institute and Center Directors

FROM: Deputy Director for Management, NIH

SUBJECT: Controls on Filling Administrative Management Positions

As a follow-up to a hiring freeze discussion at a recent Executive Officer Lunch Group meeting, I wanted to outline some steps that we are taking to provide some relief to the current hiring restrictions.

I have asked the Office of Strategic Management Planning to prepare a request for the Office of the Secretary to allow internal reassignments with no promotion potential at the NIH for the GS-13 and above positions with my prior approval. This would allow lateral transfers between Institutes with my approval. I will keep you apprised of the status of this request. If an IC wishes to recruit outside of NIH or promote internal employees at the GS-13 and above, advertising may proceed, however, a freeze exception will still be required through the Office of the Secretary prior to filling a position. As you are aware the Office of the Secretary is paying particular attention to administrative management positions, therefore, there is a risk involved in advertising before an exception is obtained.

In addition, for GS-12 and below positions, I am giving the Institutes the authority to do competitive internal announcements, allow for promotions (including both career ladder and gradual assumption of duties), and reassignments, **within their IC** (with no promotion potential above the GS-12). I am hopeful that this will help Institutes manage their resources and work within their workforce plans while giving consideration to upcoming restructuring and outsourcing initiatives.

To address other pressing needs that cannot be met within an IC, I am creating the NIH Administrative Freeze Exception Committee that will be responsible for making recommendations to me on how to proceed with the granting of individual freeze exception requests along with other freeze management issues. This committee will plan to meet weekly as long as the caseload requires and will consist of senior OD staff and IC Executive Officers. The creation of this committee does not change the approving official for granting freeze exceptions; however I will charge this group with making recommendations to me on cases that should be submitted to the Department (at the GS-13 level and above) and cases that I have the authority to approve at the GS-12 level and below.

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At this time the committee is reviewing what processes and procedures will need to be in place. As further directions are developed, I will forward them to you.

Questions regarding the freeze process may be addressed to Eddie Ribas or Sharon Quinn on 496-1443.

/s/
Charles E. Leasure, Jr.

cc:
Executive Officers
OSMP
OHR